

Live video links Navy dad with firstborn shortly after delivery

By Dewey Mitchell

Wilford Hall Medical Center

While most Americans enjoyed the Fourth of July weekend with their families, Naval Petty Officer 2nd Class Luis Bautista, Jr., was halfway around the globe from his wife, Marisa, Saturday morning when she gave birth to their first child.

But with a little high-tech help, the family was connected by videoteleconference just a little over two hours after Luis Matthew Bautista was born here.

"About the only thing I remember is when he came into the room over there, he got this big smile on his face," Marisa said. A first for the "Flagship" Air Force hospital, the Wilford Hall staff linked Marisa and baby with Luis, who was taken from the USS Dextrous to the U.S. Fifth Fleet Headquarters in the Persian Gulf, so he could get his first live glimpse of his new son.

"We wanted to demonstrate what can be done for our young military families with today's technology and

interservice cooperation," said Wilford Hall Vice Commander Col. (Dr.) Dave Schall. He said that this is not a new service of the hospital, although with the rapid pace of communication technologies, it may become standard in the future.

"I think it helped her a lot," said Marisa's mother, Grace Rivas, of the teleconference. She noted that there had been some concerns about the baby during labor and delivery. Born at 2:18 a.m. Saturday, Luis Matthew weighed 8 pounds, 4 Ounces, and was a full 21 inches in length.

Describing herself as a military "brat," Mrs. Bautista was born in a military hospital and currently resides with her parents, Daniel and Grace Rivas, in San Antonio. Her father retired from the Navy and her grandfather retired from the Air Force.



Bautista gets a close look at his first child.

"I really appreciate how much everyone helped me, especially Capt. (Dr.) Matthew Isom, Capt. Yvette Calhoun, Maj. (Dr.) Nicolo Geralde, and Col. (Dr.) Howard Heiman."

The USS Dextrous falls under the umbrella of the Mine Warfare Command, with headquarters at Naval Station Corpus Christi.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Luis Bautista, Jr., sees his wife, Marisa, and newborn son, Luis Matthew, for the first time early Saturday via videoteleconference.